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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/502,224	05/17/2005	Mahendra S. Rao	UT-0048	1620
26259	7590	01/10/2007	EXAMINER	
LICATA & TYRRELL P.C. 66 E. MAIN STREET MARLTON, NJ 08053			SAJJADI, FEREYDOUN GHOTB	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1633	
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE		MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
31 DAYS		01/10/2007	PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/502,224	RAO ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Fereydoun G. Sajjadi	1633	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) Claim(s) 1-10 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-10 are pending in the application.

Election/Restrictions

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

1. This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claim(s) 1-4, drawn to a population of mammalian CD44 immunoreactive precursor cells that can generate astrocytes; a pharmaceutical composition comprising said cells; and a method for isolating the same.

Group II, claim(s) 5-10, drawn to a method of treating damaged neural cells comprising administering to said damaged cells a pharmaceutical composition comprising a population of mammalian CD44 immunoreactive precursor cells that can generate astrocytes.

37 CFR 1.475 (c) states:

“If an application contains claims to more or less than one of the combinations of categories of invention set forth in paragraph (b) of this section, unity of invention might not be present.”

37 CFR 1.475 (d) states:

“If multiple products, processes of manufacture or uses are claimed, the first invention of the category first mentioned in the claims of the application and the first recited invention of each of the other categories related thereto will be considered as the main invention in the claims, see PCT Article 17(3)(a) and §1.476(c).”

In view of 37 CFR 1.475 (c) and 37 CFR 1.475 (d), Group I is considered the main invention that is drawn to the first product, first mentioned in the claims of the application (i.e.

CD44 immunoreactive precursor cells) and the first recited invention drawn to other categories related thereto (i.e. a method of isolating said cells).

The inventions listed as Groups I-II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features. According to PCT Rule 13.2, unity of invention exists only when a shared same or corresponding special technical feature is a contribution over the prior art. The technical feature, which is shared by Groups I-II, is CD44 immunoreactive mammalian precursor cells that generate astrocytes. Groups I-II do not share a special technical feature over the art because Woodbury et al. (J. Neurosci. Res. 61:364-370; 2000), discloses rat and human bone marrow stromal cells that can be expanded *in vitro* and differentiated into neuronal cells (Abstract). While the cells do not express GFAP (second column, p. 367), they are positive for CD44 expression (second column, p. 365), and can differentiate into astrocytes when injected into the lateral ventricles of neonatal mice (second column, p. 364).

Additionally, Group I-II claims are drawn to multiple distinct processes of use that do not share the same inventive concept. The claimed inventions of Groups I-II are directed to distinct goal and method steps, and thus have their own technical features. Each of the groups has a technical feature not required for the other groups. For example, the method of cell isolation is distinct from the method of treatment for damaged neural cells. Thus, the methods of using each the compositions of the invention are distinct, requiring non-coextensive search and examination.

Thus, it follows from the preceding analysis that the claimed inventions listed as Groups I-II do not relate to a single inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding technical features for the reasons set forth above.

2. This application contains claims directed to more than one species of the generic invention. These species are deemed to lack unity of invention because they are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

The species are as follows:

A homogeneous population of mammalian astrocyte precursor cells, as recited in claim 1 and 2.

A pharmaceutical composition comprising a homogeneous population of mammalian astrocyte precursor cells and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, as recited in claim 3.

A pharmaceutical composition comprising a homogeneous population of mammalian astrocyte precursor cells and an implant seeded or coated with said cells, as recited in claim 4.

The pharmaceutical carrier, that may be an excipient, and the implant are structurally and functionally distinct, having no substantially shared common technical features, where each is not required for the other, requiring non-coextensive search and examination of their respective subject matter. Similarly, the homogenous population of mammalian astrocyte precursor cells constitutes a composition that is distinct from said pharmaceutical compositions and does not require any carrier or implants for its function.

Applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single species to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. The reply must also identify the claims readable on the elected species, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered non-responsive unless accompanied by an election.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP §809.02(a).

The claims are deemed to correspond to the species listed above in the following manner:

Claims 1, 3, and 4, and claims dependent therefrom correspond to all the species listed above.

The following claim(s) are generic: 1-10.

The species listed above do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, the species lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: As the technical features linking the members do not constitute a special technical feature as defined by PCT Rule 13.2, particularly since the pure homogeneous population of cells, the pharmaceutical carrier and implant do not share a

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substantially common structural feature or function, the requirement for unity of invention is not fulfilled.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Fereydoun G. Sajjadi whose telephone number is **(571) 272-3311**. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday, between 7:00 am-4:00 pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Woitach can be reached on **(571) 272-0739**. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is **(571) 273-8300**. The faxing of such papers must conform with the notice published in the Official Gazette, 1096 OG 30 (November 15, 1989).

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at **866-217-9197** (toll-free).

For all other customer support, please call the USPTO Call Center (UCC) at **(800) 786-9199**.

Fereydoun G. Sajjadi, Ph.D.
Examiner, USPTO, AU 1633

ANNE M. WEHBE PH.D
PRIMARY EXAMINER